

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of decrypting contents information, comprising the steps of:

5 generating a signal representative of a key in response to key production information, the key being for decrypting encryption-resultant contents information;

 decrypting the encryption-resultant contents information in response to the generated signal representative of the key;

10 receiving key-related information which has been generated by an external in response to an authentication value and at least a portion of the key production information according to a predetermined function;

 receiving issue ID information which has been generated in response to the authentication value and decryption-side ID information peculiar to a decryption side;

15 reproducing the authentication value from the decryption-side ID information and the received issue ID information; and

 generating at least a portion of the key production information from the reproduced authentication value and the received key-related information according to a function inverse with respect to the predetermined function.

2. A method of decrypting encryption-resultant contents information generated by an encryption side which implements the steps of generating a first-key signal representative of a first key

from first-key base information being a base of the first key;
encrypting contents information into encryption-resultant contents
information in response to the first-key signal; generating a second-
key signal representative of a second key from second-key base

5 information being a base of the second key; encrypting at least a
portion of the first-key base information to convert the first-key
base information into encryption-resultant first-key base information
in response to the second-key signal; and generating second-key-
related information from the second-key base information and an
10 authentication value according to a predetermined function; the
method comprising the steps of:

receiving issue ID information which has been generated in
response to the authentication value and decryption-side ID
information peculiar to a decryption side;

15 reproducing the authentication value from the decryption-side
ID information and the received issue ID information;

reproducing second-key base information from second-key-
related information and the reproduced authentication value
according to a function inverse with respect to the predetermined
20 function;

generating a second-key signal representative of a second key
from the reproduced second-key base information;

decrypting encryption-resultant first-key base information
into original first-key base information in response to the generated
25 second-key signal;

generating a first-key signal representative of a first key from

the original first-key base information; and

decrypting encryption-resultant contents information into original contents information in response to the generated first-key signal.

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3. An apparatus for decrypting contents information, comprising:
means for generating a signal representative of a key in response to key production information, the key being for decrypting encryption-resultant contents information;

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means for decrypting the encryption-resultant contents information in response to the generated signal representative of the key;

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means for receiving key-related information which has been generated by an external in response to an authentication value and at least a portion of the key production information according to a predetermined function;

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means for receiving issue ID information which has been generated in response to the authentication value and decryption-side ID information peculiar to a decryption side;

means for reproducing the authentication value from the decryption-side ID information and the received issue ID information; and

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means for generating at least a portion of the key production information from the reproduced authentication value and the received key-related information according to a function inverse with respect to the predetermined function.

4. An apparatus for decrypting encryption-resultant contents information generated by an encryption side which implements the steps of generating a first-key signal representative of a first key
- 5 from first-key base information being a base of the first key; encrypting contents information into encryption-resultant contents information in response to the first-key signal; generating a second-key signal representative of a second key from second-key base information being a base of the second key; encrypting at least a
- 10 portion of the first-key base information to convert the first-key base information into encryption-resultant first-key base information in response to the second-key signal; and generating second-key-related information from the second-key base information and an authentication value according to a predetermined function; the
- 15 apparatus comprising:
- means for receiving issue ID information which has been generated in response to the authentication value and decryption-side ID information peculiar to a decryption side;
- means for reproducing the authentication value from the
- 20 decryption-side ID information and the received issue ID information;
- means for reproducing second-key base information from second-key-related information and the reproduced authentication value according to a function inverse with respect to the
- 25 predetermined function;
- means for generating a second-key signal representative of a

second key from the reproduced second-key base information;

means for decrypting encryption-resultant first-key base information into original first-key base information in response to the generated second-key signal;

5 means for generating a first-key signal representative of a first key from the original first-key base information; and

means for decrypting encryption-resultant contents information into original contents information in response to the generated first-key signal.

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5. An apparatus as recited in claim 3, wherein the issue-ID-information receiving means comprises an input device for enabling a user to input the issue ID information.

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6. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the issue-ID-information receiving step comprises receiving the issue ID information after it has been confirmed by a sender for the issue ID information that the decryption-side ID information is legitimate.